

## Guide to Raising a Charmer

**A yearlong guide to your dog's socialization process.**

*Arden Moore*

**Juvenile Stage: 3 to 6 months**  
**Physical Growth:** This marks a time of tremendous physical growth. By 6 months of age, most puppies reach 90 percent of their physical stature. Some male puppies will have the physical muscle and coordination to be able to lift their legs to urinate. Most puppies should be able to sleep through the night without needing a potty break. Permanent teeth begin emerging at 5 months, creating a need to chew to relieve gum discomfort.  
**Social Growth:** Often known as the juvenile stage, during this period most puppies are full of energy and excitement and are easily distracted. Puppies start to bond with people who consistently provide them affection, comfort, interaction and direction. They also display increasing independence and the desire to explore by themselves. Puppies gain the concept of hierarchy and start to identify where they rank in a social setting with other dogs and people. Their play becomes more sophisticated as they progress from simple rolling and romping to deliberately exhibiting acts of dominance by mounting, pushing and shoving to obtain possession of a prized toy or treat. They also learn to use and read canine body language.  
**Social Skill Tips:** Practice patience and understanding. During this developmental period, your once-obedient puppy may temporarily forget or conveniently choose to forget simple learned commands such as come or sit or stay. Maintain control of the leash during walks and be careful opening doors because some puppies at this age like to dart outside, explore and ignore your calls to come back. Stick with short training sessions lasting no more than 10 to 15 minutes and always reward appropriate behavior with praise and food treats.  
**Next Step: Adolescent Chewers: 6 to 9 Months**